

# Summary of Hunting Regulations & Laws

The laws and regulations on the following pages are summarized from the California Fish and Game Code (FGC), the California Penal Code (PC) and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (T14). The summaries are intended only as a guide and not a replacement for the complete laws and regulations. To access the entire California Fish and Game Code and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, visit the DFG Web site at [www.dfg.ca.gov/enforcement](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/enforcement). For the complete California Penal Code, go to [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov).

## General Terminology

### Bag Limit

The maximum limit, in number or amount, of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, or amphibians that may lawfully be taken by any one person during a specified period of time.

### Possession Limit

The maximum, in number or amount, of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, or amphibians that may be lawfully possessed by one person.

### Big Game

Deer (genus *Odocoileus*), elk (genus *Cervus*), pronghorn antelope (genus *Antilocapra*), wild pig (feral pigs, European wild pigs and their hybrids [genus *Sus*]), black bear (genus *Ursus*) and Nelson bighorn sheep (subspecies *Ovis canadensis nelsoni*). T14-350.

### Condor Range

The geographic area where lead is prohibited is exactly the same area described in the recently enacted AB 821- Ridley-Tree Condor Preservation Act (Nava) and entered into the Fish and Game Code as section 3004.5. To assist hunters in understanding and visualizing affected areas, the lead prohibition area is also known as deer hunt zones D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D13, and most (but not all) of the South A zone.

### Drawing Types:

#### Modified Preference Point Drawing System

A drawing system which utilizes both a Draw-By-Choice drawing and a Preference Point drawing for awarding hunting tags to drawing applicants. T-14 708(g).

#### Draw-by-choice Drawing

A drawing in which tags are awarded according to an applicant's hunt choice and computer-generated random number (lowest to highest), without consideration of accumulated points. T14-708(g).

### Preference Point Drawing

A drawing in which tags are awarded based on the following order of priority: an applicant's hunt choice (first choice only for deer), accumulated point totals by species (highest to lowest), and computer-generated random number (lowest to highest). Applicants who are unsuccessful in receiving a tag for premium deer (based on first choice selection), bighorn sheep, elk or pronghorn antelope hunts shall receive one preference point for use in future Big Game Drawings. T14-708(g).

### Junior Hunting License

A reduced-fee license for hunters under age 16. FGC 3031.

### License Year

A 12-month period beginning July 1 and ending June 30. FGC 3037.

### Projectile

Defined as any bullet, ball, sabot, slug, buckshot or other device which is expelled from a firearm through a barrel by force. T14-353.

### Resident

Any person who has resided continuously in California for six months immediately before the date of application for a license, tag or permit; persons on active duty with the armed forces of the United States or an auxiliary branch; or Job Corps enrollees. FGC 70.

### Season

That period of time during which game mammals may be taken. All dates are inclusive. T14-258.

### Shooting Time

Legal California time for the date specified. For example: during the days when California is on Pacific Daylight Saving Time, Pacific Daylight Saving Time is intended; when California is legally on Pacific Standard Time, Pacific Standard Time is intended. When reference is

made to sunrise or sunset time, such reference is to the sunrise or sunset time at the location of the hunter. T14-250.5.

### Shooting Hours on Big Game

Hunting and shooting hours for big game, including but not limited to deer, antelope, elk, bear, and wild pig shall be from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. T14-352.

### Take

Hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill. FGC 86.

## Big Game Definitions

### Antlerless Deer

Female deer, fawns of either sex other than spotted fawns, and male deer with an unbranched antler on one or both sides which is not more than three inches in length. T14-351(b).

### Either-sex Deer

Antlerless deer, or legal bucks that have two or more points in the upper two-thirds of either antler. T14-351(c).

### Forked-horn Buck

A male deer having a branched antler on either side with the branch in the upper two-thirds of the antler. Eyeguards or other bony projections on the lower one-third of the antler shall not be considered as points or branches. T14-351(a).

### Spike Buck Deer

A male deer with unbranched antlers on both sides which are more than 3 inches in length. FGC 204(d).

### Antlerless Elk\*

Any elk, with the exception of spotted calves, with antlers less than four inches in length as measured from the top of the skull.

### Bull Elk\*

Any elk having an antler or antlers at least four inches in length as measured from the top of the skull.

\* The Fish and Game Commission will consider this definition at its May 9, 2008 meeting. See page 6 for details.

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## Either-Sex Elk

Bull elk or antlerless elk. T14-364(m)(4).

## Spike Bull Elk

A bull elk having no more than one point on each antler. An antler point is a projection of the antler at least one inch long and longer than the width of its base. T14-364(m)(2).

## Buck Pronghorn Antelope

Pronghorn antelope with horns longer than the ears. T14-363 (k)(2).

## Doe Pronghorn Antelope

Pronghorn antelope with horns shorter than the ears. T14-363 (k)(2).

## Either-Sex Pronghorn Antelope

Buck or doe pronghorn antelope. T14-363 (k)(2).

## Hunt Types

### Archery Seasons and Archery-Only Hunt

A season or hunt in which the only legal method of take is a bow and arrow. T14-354 and 361. You may not possess a firearm while hunting in the field during any archery season, Area-Specific Archery Hunt, or while hunting during the general season with an Archery-Only tag. T-14 354(h).

### Apprentice Hunt

Hunts open only to hunters with a valid Junior Hunting License. In T14-360(c), 363, and 364; deer, pronghorn antelope and elk, respectively.

### Muzzleloading Rifle Only Hunt

A hunt in which only muzzleloading rifles equipped with open or "peep" type sights may be used. Scopes are not permitted. T14-353(f)

### Premium Deer Hunt

Deer hunts, including X zones, Additional Hunts and Area-Specific Archery Hunts, which are issued through the Big Game Drawing. Typically these hunts are in high demand and have lower tag quotas. T14-708(a)(2)(A)1.

## Method of Take Definitions for Big Game

### Legal Methods of Take for Big Game

- Rifles using centerfire cartridges with softnose or expanding projectiles, bow and arrow, or muzzleloading rifles may

be used to take big game. A projectile is defined as any bullet, ball, sabot, slug, buckshot or other device which is expelled from a firearm through a barrel by force. T14-353(a).

- Shotguns capable of holding not more than three shells firing single slugs may be used for the taking of deer, bear and wild pigs. In areas where the discharge of rifles or shotguns with slugs is prohibited by county ordinance, shotguns capable of holding not more than three shells firing size 0 or 00 buckshot may be used for the taking of deer only. T14-353(b).

- Pistols and revolvers using centerfire cartridges with softnose or expanding projectiles may be used to take deer, bear, and wild pigs. T14-353(c).

- Pistols and revolvers with minimum barrel lengths of 4 inches, using centerfire cartridges with softnose or expanding projectiles may be used to take elk and bighorn sheep. T14-353(d).

- Crossbows may be used to take deer and wild pigs only during the regular seasons. T14-353(e).

- Within the Condor Range, only projectiles certified by the Commission as non-lead may be used or possessed while taking big game. T14-353(h).

### Bow and Arrow Defined

A bow is any device consisting of a flexible material having a string connecting its two ends and used to propel an arrow held in a firing position by hand only. Bow includes long bow, recurve or compound bow. A legal arrow is a broad head type blade which will not pass through a hole seven-eighths inch in diameter. Mechanical/retractable broad heads shall be measured in the open position. No arrow with an explosive head or with any substance which would tranquilize or poison any animal may be used. T14-354.

### Crossbow Defined and Restrictions

Any device consisting of a bow or cured latex band or other flexible material (commonly referred to as a linear bow) affixed to a stock, or any bow that utilizes any device attached directly or indirectly to the bow for the purpose of keeping a crossbow bolt, an arrow or the string in a firing position. A crossbow is not archery equipment and cannot be used during the archery deer season. Crossbow bolts with a broad head type blade which will not pass through a hole seven-eighths

inch in diameter shall be used. No bolt with an explosive head or with any substance which would tranquilize or poison any animal may be used. T14-354.

### Muzzleloading Rifle Defined

Rifle in which the charge and projectile are loaded from the muzzle. This includes wheellock, matchlock, flintlock or percussion type, including "in-line" muzzleloading rifles using black powder or equivalent black powder substitute, including pellets, with single projectile loaded from the muzzle and at least .40 caliber in designation. T14-354(a).

## Related Terms and Definitions

### Bait Related to Bears

Any material capable of attracting a bear. T14-365(e).

### Baited Area

Any area where shelled, shucked or unshucked corn, wheat or other grains, salt, or other feed whatsoever capable of luring, attracting, or enticing such birds or mammals is directly or indirectly placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, and such area shall remain a baited area for ten days following complete removal of all such corn, wheat or other grains, salt, or other feed. T14-257.5.

### Harass Defined

An intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering. T14-251.1.

### Use of Dogs for Hunting Big Game

#### Dog Training Defined

The education of dogs through "breaking" or "practicing" under strict provisions that preclude the injuring or take of animals. Training is distinguished from "pursuit", in that the animal being chased shall not be killed, captured, or injured. T14-265.

#### Treeing Switch

Device on a dog collar consisting of a mercury switch mechanism that results in a change in the transmitted signals when the dog raises its head to a treed animal. T14-265(d)(1).

### Public Road or Other Way Open

This includes any roads, dirt or otherwise, trails, open fields, parking lots, etc., open to public access. FGC 2006.

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## It is Illegal to:

- Take game mammals except as permitted by regulations. T14-250.
- Hunt big game without a valid hunting license and tag. FGC 1054.2.
- Hunt with a crossbow during archery season (except with a Disabled Archer Permit). T14-354(g).
- Possess a firearm while hunting during archery season or while hunting during the general season with an archery-only tag. T14-354(h).
- Take spike bucks. FGC 204(d).
- Pursue, drive, herd, or take any bird or mammal from any type of motor-driven air or land vehicles, motorboat, airboat, sailboat, or snowmobile, except when the motor is off and/or the sails furled and it is drifting, beached, moored, resting at anchor, or is being propelled by paddle, oar or pole. T14-251.
- Harass, herd or drive any game or nongame mammal or furbearing mammal. T14-251.1.
- Knowingly feed big game mammals. T14-251.3.
- Take mammals within 400 yards of any baited area. This does not apply to the taking of mammals on or over standing crops, croplands, or grains found scattered solely as the result of normal agricultural operations or procedures. T14-257.5.
- Take bears within 400 yards of any garbage dump or bait. T14-365(e).
- Take more than two deer per license year. T14-708(a)(1).
- Intentionally discharge a firearm or release an arrow or crossbow bolt from a bow or crossbow upon or across any highway, road or other way open to vehicular traffic. T14-354(e), FGC 3004(b).
- Nock or fit the notch in the end of an arrow to a bowstring or crossbow string in a ready-to-fire position while in or on any vehicle. T14-354(i).
- Hunt with bow or crossbow that will not cast a legal hunting arrow, except flu-flu arrows, a horizontal distance of 130 yards. T14-354(f).
- Hunt big game from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise. T14-352.
- Use dogs for pursuit/take, or for dog training, during the archery seasons for deer or bear. T14-265(a)(1).
- Use dogs to take elk, bighorn sheep and antelope. T14-265(a)(2).
- Use dogs for pursuit/take of, or for dog training on, mountain lions (except under authority of a depredation permit). T14-265(a)(3).
- Use an artificial light to assist in taking any game bird or game mammal. FGC 2005.
- To deposit, permit to pass into, or place where it can pass into the waters of the state, or to abandon, dispose of, or throw away, within 150 feet of the high water mark of the waters of the state, any cans, bottles, garbage, rubbish, or the viscera or carcass of any dead mammal, or the carcass of any dead bird. FGC 5652.
- Fail to send a complete written report to the Department within 48 hours after killing or wounding while hunting, any human being, or domestic animal belonging to another, or after witnessing such killing or wounding. FGC 12151.5.
- Use a shotgun larger than 10 gauge for the taking of any game bird or game mammal, a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells in the magazine and chamber combined. FGC 2010; T14-311 and 353(b).
- Possess a machine gun, silencer, shotgun with barrel less than 18 inches in length, or rifle with barrel less than 16 inches in length. PC 12020.
- Possess in any State Game Refuge any bird or mammal or part thereof, or any weapon capable of taking any bird. FGC 10500. However, possession of firearms or bows and arrows by persons traveling through game refuges on a public highway or other public thoroughfare or right of way is permitted when the firearms are taken apart or encased and unloaded, and the bows are unstrung. FGC 10506. (National Parks and Monuments have special regulations regarding the possession of weapons, game and the running of hunting dogs. Check with federal officials before entering these areas.)
- Hunt any game bird or mammal without having the required licenses, tags and/or stamps in possession; FGC 1054.2. Change, mutilate, or transfer any license, tag, or stamp; Have in possession while hunting any license belonging to another person. FGC 1052.
- Damage other's property while hunting. FGC 2004.
- Sell or barter game taken under authority of a hunting license. FGC 3039.

## Dog Control Zones

The use of dogs for pursuit, take, or for dog training is restricted in Dog Control Zones, as shown on the map on page 51. (For physical boundary descriptions of all Dog Control Zones, consult the California Hunting Regulations, Mammals and Furbearers.

The use of dogs for the pursuit/take of mammals or for dog training is prohibited in Dog Control Zones from the first Saturday in April through the day preceding the opening of the general deer season. T14-265(a)(4).

The use of dogs for the pursuit/take of mammals or for dog training is allowed in Dog Control Zones from the opening day of the general deer season through the first Friday in April. T14-265(b)(1).

Pursuits or dog training may not be started within 400 yards of a baited area. T14-265(b)(5).

## Dog Training

No person shall kill, capture or injure any mammal, nor shall any person's dog be allowed to kill, capture or injure any mammal during dog training. T14-265(b)(6)(B).

No firearm, archery gear, crossbow or other instrument capable of killing, injuring or capturing any animal may be possessed by any person while training dogs. However, such equipment may be transported to or from a campsite, transported to or from a residence or lawfully possessed by a person at a campsite pro-



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vided all dogs are secured and under control. T14-265(b)(6)(C).

It is illegal to train dogs on any big game mammal or any fully-protected, threatened or endangered mammal at any time, except: 1) A person in possession of a valid bear tag may train dogs for bear during the general bear season; and 2) A person in possession of a valid deer tag may train a dog for deer during the general deer season. Only one dog may be used for training in areas where the general deer season is open. T14-265(b)(6)(E).

## Use of Dogs for Pursuit/Take

No more than one dog per hunter may be used in the area where the

general deer season is open. T14-265(c)(1).

Up to three dogs per hunter may be used for the purpose of taking wild pigs, except: 1) No more than one dog per hunter may be used in an area where the general deer season is open; and 2) No dogs may be used in Dog Control Zones from the first Saturday in April through the day preceding the opening of the general deer season. T14-265(c)(2).

After the general deer season closes, there is no limit on the number of dogs that may be used during the general bear season. T14-265(c)(2)(C).

Electronic dog retrieval collars employing the use of Treeing Switches or Global Positioning System Equipment are prohibited on dogs used for the pursuit/take of mammals. T14-265(d).

## Tagging Requirements

Immediately upon killing a deer, both portions of the deer license tag must be completely filled out and the date of kill permanently marked on the deer license tag. The deer license tag must be attached to the antlers of an antlered deer or to the ear of any other deer and kept attached during the open season and for 15 days thereafter. T14-708(a)(3).

Any person legally killing a deer in this state must have the deer license tag validated and countersigned by an authorized person (see list on page 52). T14-708(a)(4).

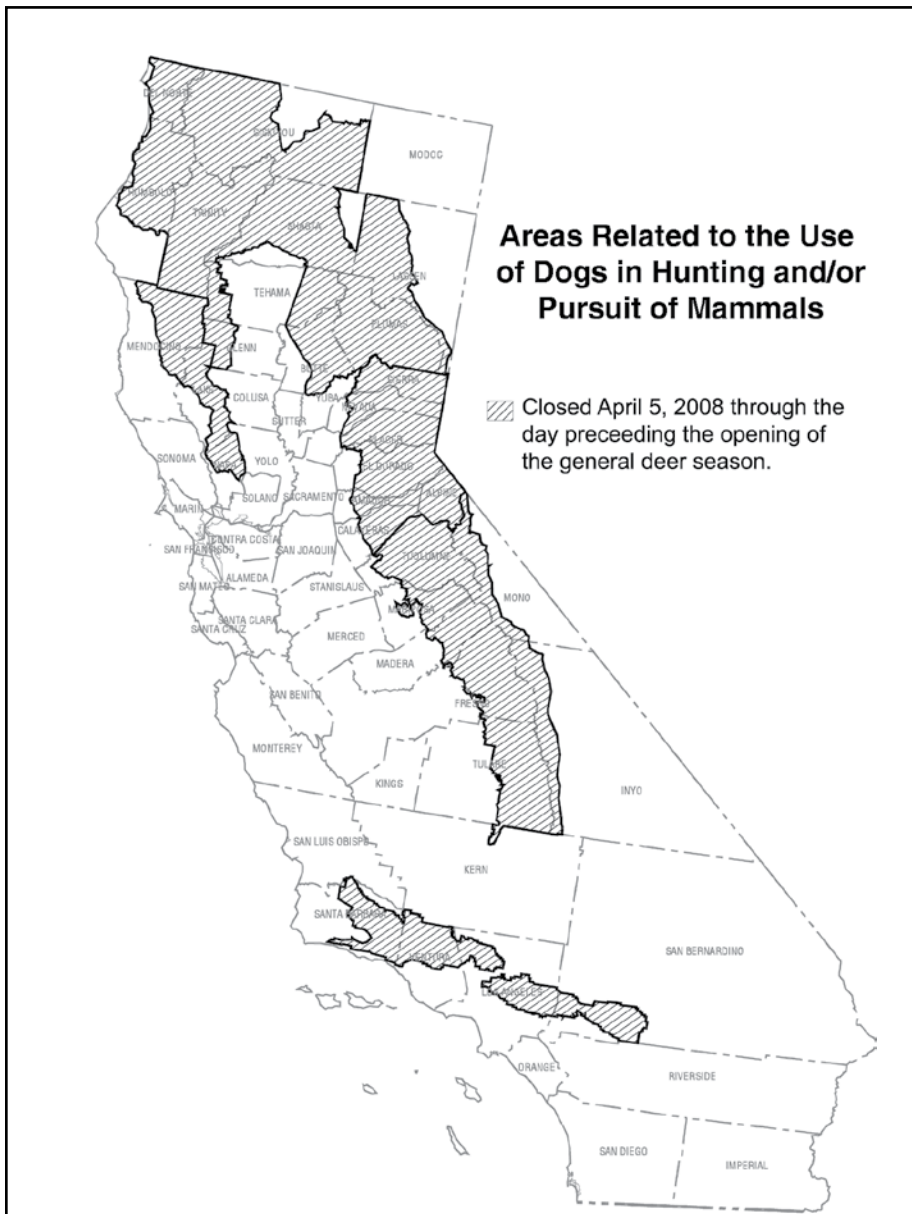
Any person taking any deer in this state must retain in their possession during the open season, and for 15 days thereafter, that portion of the head which in adult males normally bears the antlers, and shall produce it upon the demand of any officer authorized to enforce Fish and Game regulations. T14-708(a)(5).

Every person to whom a deer tag is issued must return the completed report card portion to the DFG within 30 days of taking a deer. T14-708(a)(6).

Any person who is convicted of a violation involving deer shall forfeit their current year deer license tags and no new deer license tags may be issued to that person during that hunting license year. That person may not apply for a deer tag for the following license year. T14-708(a)(7).

## Safety Issues

It is always unlawful to: Place on, or carry or possess a loaded rifle or shotgun in a vehicle or conveyance or its attachments on any public road or other way open to the public; FGC 2006. Hunt while intoxicated; FGC 3001. Shoot at any game bird from a powerboat, sailboat, motor vehicle,



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or aircraft while under power or still moving from use of sail or motor; T14 251(a). Shoot any firearm from or upon a public road or highway; PC374(c).

It is unlawful to possess a loaded rifle or shotgun in any vehicle or conveyance or its attachments which is standing on or along or is being driven on or along any public highway or other way open to the public. A rifle or shotgun shall be deemed to be loaded for the purposes of this section when there is an unexpended cartridge or shell in the firing chamber but not when the only cartridges or shells are in the magazine. The provisions of this section shall not apply to peace officers or members of the armed forces of this state or the United States, while on duty or going to or returning from duty. FGC 2006.

Except as provided in subdivision (b), (c) or (d), every person who carries a loaded firearm on his or her person or in a vehicle while in any public place or on any public street in an incorporated city or in any public place or on any public street in a prohibited area of unincorporated territory is guilty of a misdemeanor. A firearm shall be deemed to be loaded for the purposes of this section when there is an unexpended cartridge or shell, consisting of a case which holds a charge of powder and a bullet or shot, in, or attached in any manner to, the firearm, including, but not limited to, in the firing chamber, magazine, or clip thereof attached to the firearm; except that a muzzle-loader firearm shall be deemed to be loaded when it is capped or primed and has a powder charge and ball or shot in the barrel or cylinder. PC 12031.

It is unlawful for any person, other than the owner, person in possession of the premises, or a person having the express permission of the owner or person in possession of the premises, to hunt or to discharge while hunting, any firearm or other deadly weapon within 150 yards of

## Persons Authorized to Validate or Countersign Deer and Elk Tags (T14-708)\*

### *State:*

1. Fish and Game Commissioners
2. Employees of the Department of Fish and Game
3. Deputy Foresters
4. Assistant Deputy Foresters
5. Forest Rangers
6. Park Rangers—Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4
7. Supervising Plant Quarantine Inspectors
8. Junior, Intermediate and Senior Plant Quarantine Inspectors
9. Foresters
10. Fire Prevention Officers—Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4
11. Fire Captains
12. Fire Apparatus Engineers

### *Federal: (FS = U.S. Forest Service, FWS = U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, BLM = Bureau of Land Management)*

1. Range Technicians (BLM)
2. Forest Supervisors (FS)
3. Assistant Forest Supervisors (FS)
4. District Forest Rangers (FS)
5. Foresters (FS, BLM)
6. Range Conservationists (FS, BLM)
7. Forest Engineers (FS, BLM)
8. Forestry Aides (FS)
9. Fire Control Officers or Aides (FS, BLM)
10. Clerks (FS, FWS, BLM) while on duty at their headquarters
11. Game Management Agents (FWS)
12. Wildlife Management Biologists (FS, FWS, BLM)
13. District Managers (BLM)
14. Information Specialists (BLM)
15. Area Managers (BLM)
16. Realty Specialists (BLM)
17. Natural Resource Specialists (BLM)
18. Engineers (BLM)
19. Engineering Technicians (BLM)
20. Recreation Resource Specialists (BLM)
21. Geologists (BLM)
22. Recreation Aides (BLM)
23. All Uniformed Personnel of the National Park Service
24. Commanding officers of any United States military installation or their designated personnel for deer taken on their reservation.
25. Postmasters
26. Post Office Station or Branch Manager for deer brought to their post office.

### *Miscellaneous:*

1. County firemen at and above the class of foreman for deer brought into their station.
2. Judges or Justices of all state and United States courts.
3. Notaries Public
4. Peace Officers
5. Nonsalaried police officers or deputy sheriffs while on scheduled duty in a city or county of appointment for deer brought to a police station or sheriff's office
6. Officers authorized to administer oaths
7. Owners, corporate officers, managers or operators of lockers or cold storage plants for deer brought to their place of business.

\*No person may validate or countersign their own tag.



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*Robert & Dustin Prater, Zone D6*

any occupied dwelling house, residence, or other building or any barn or other outbuilding used in connection therewith. The 150-yard area is a "safety zone." FGC 3004(a).

## Trespassing Issues

If the land you hunt on is not your own, it belongs to someone else. Make sure you have a legal right to be there. Contact the owner or person who administers the property, and secure written permission to hunt. A hunting license does not entitle you to enter private property.

"It is unlawful to enter any lands under cultivation or enclosed by a fence, belonging to, or occupied by, another, or to enter any uncultivated or unenclosed lands, including lands temporarily inundated by waters

flowing outside the established banks of a river, stream, slough, or other waterway, where signs forbidding trespass are displayed at intervals not less than three to the mile along all exterior boundaries and at all roads and trails

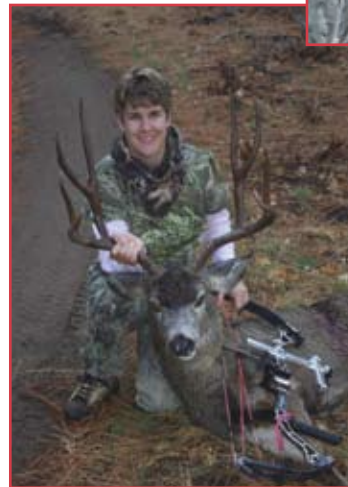
entering such lands, for the purpose of discharging any firearm or taking or destroying any mammal or bird, including any waterfowl, on such lands without having first obtained written permission from the owner of such lands, or his agent, or the person in lawful possession thereof. Such signs may be of any size and wording, other than the wording required for signs under Section 2017, which will fairly advise persons about to enter the land that the use of such land is so restricted." FGC 2016.

## Harassment of Hunters

The Fish and Game Code outlaws "hunter harassment" or interfering with another person who is lawfully hunting, trapping, shooting, fishing or engaging in falconry. The first offense is an infraction; the second offense within a two-year period is a misdemeanor. Interference means any action which physically impedes, hinders, or obstructs the lawful pursuit of any



*Mike Lewis, Mendocino National Forest Archery*



*Renee Tompkins, A26 Late Season Archery*



*Mason Cooper, Zone B*

of the above-mentioned activities, including, but not limited to, actions taken for the purpose of frightening away animals from the location where the lawful activity is taking place. FGC 2009.

## Lacey Act

Transporting illegally taken game across state lines is a violation of the federal Lacey Act (T16, US Code 1406). Such transport, if done in connection with commercial activity, may be classified as a felony.



*Lauren Kincheloe, Monterey County*